



EHUOPC Meeting – 9th December, 2025

Attendees:

Liz Pelling (Chairman Elite) (LP), Dawn Bonner (Chairman Conference) (DB), Sean Edwards (NPUA Chair) (SE), Lee Barron – in part (EHUSSC Chair) (LB), Jade Bloomfield (JB), Mark Everard (ME), Debbie Garner (DG) – in part, Simon Gillett (SG), Matt Harrison (MH), Ann Hopkins (AH), Jonathon Hull (JH), Hamish Jamson (HJ), Peter Mackintosh (PM), David Monger (DM)

The Meetings opened at 19:30 on Tuesday 9th December 2025 via Teams conferencing.

1. Apologies for Absence

Jade Bloomfield (JB), Charles Hallows (CH), Hannah Harrison (HPP represented by DM), Louise Knipe (LK), Gary Stent (GS), Julian Warburton (JW)

2. Minutes of 30 September Meeting

No matters arising not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

3. Updates from NPUA Exec/EHUSSC

NPUA Exec Update: SE

A reminder to members that the **second fitness test window** for N1, N2 and HPP opened on 1st December and closes on 18th January

Exec is looking at deadlines for tests for next season to allow for parity with FIH windows. FIH have made it compulsory for all outdoor umpires to do three tests per season. NPUA will expect all those on EHF lists or programmes to do the same.

Decision time and development webinars have worked well. More to come in the second half of the season. The NPUA portal for clips is currently being worked on.

FIH has introduced the trial Aerial rule into the Rules of Hockey for 2026. NPUA hopes EH will introduce to all EHL for next season, but remains Premier league only for this season.

Discipline Reporting: David Elcock is the NPUA Discipline officer and is available to members who may need help when reporting discipline matters. EH has introduced online reporting for Red Cards. This can be found on the EH website <https://www.englishockey.co.uk/governance/rules-and-regulations/discipline-and-misconduct/red-cards>.

Umpires to be encouraged to download a copy of the 'old' form [1.-Combined-red-card-misconduct-complaint-form-CLEAN-LD-EDIT.pdf](#) so that they are aware of information needed for completion of the report.

EHUSSC Update: LB

Meetings held on 20 October and 22 November

Discussion primarily around operational factors of new panel structure, how the new assessment marking is working and International updates. Development opportunities for members under discussion for second half of season in February and March.

LB gave us a brief update on the Indoor season. A development webinar for the 2025/26 season was held for all indoor umpires and US with good attendance. The Schools competition took place in early December with plans in place for the Super 6s leagues starting in January.



3. Appointments Update (JW, JB, PM)

The first half of the season had some challenges, especially in November when injuries and sickness struck, but thanks to the resourcefulness of the appointers and help from many, games went ahead as planned. The Premier double header weekend at the end of Half-Term was particularly challenging as many umpires were away, but this opened the door to others.

In general, appointers have tried to balance travel to games, especially with teams in the extremities of the country, and have been mindful of personal circumstances where possible. As we move into the second half of the season when promotions and relegations are decided, appointers will be mindful of each leagues' needs and appoint accordingly and week-to-week towards the end of the season.

With thanks to the Areas for supporting EHL appointments. In general, requests to Areas have been far fewer this season so far (14 v 56 for the same period in 2024), helped by the many NPUA umpires who doubled up (30) or umpired from our reserve panel (13), or helped on the women's games if not appointed to men's games. The overall support was much appreciated by all the appointers.

Availability Dates for England Hockey Leagues:

Whilst we have given dates for availability, umpires and US are asked to update as much as you can ahead of time and to be aware of double header weekends.

DIVISION 1 and CONFERENCE

BATCH 4 – Jan/Feb Matches - (note Div 1 and Conference matches only) **Availability needed by Dec 31st**
Umpires Published By January 12-- (Jan 31, 7/8, 21/22,) Support Published By January 19

BATCH 5 – Feb/Mar Matches - (for Div 1 and Conf matches only) **Availability needed by Jan 24th**
Umpires & Support Published 2 weeks then 3x week by week - Publish by Tuesday evening each week (Feb 28/Mar1, 7/8, 14/15, 21/22, 28/29)

PREMIER: Note: Some matches may move to avoid double headers e.g. 7/14 March or midweek.

BATCH 6 – March Matches (for Premier Phase 2 matches only – note 2 x double headers)

Availability needed by February 15th

Umpires Published in three tranches - Five matches of Phase 2 Premier Tranche 1, published by March 9: (Mar 15 (M), 21/22 (M&W); Tranche 2 Publish by prior Tuesday evening: 28 M&W, 29 (W), Tranche 3: Apr 11 M&W) Publish by Tuesday evening Mar 31st Support Published weekly

BATCH 7 – Phase 3 Prem published weekly – note double header

Availability needed by April 1st

Umpires & Support = 2x week by week - Publish by prior Tuesday evening each week (Apr18 / 19 (M&W), Apr 25 (M&W)) Note: Finals May 2/3)

ACTION ALL UMPIRES AND US: Please update availability by dates requested. If you change your availability after the availability date but BEFORE publishing, please let your appointer know.

A reminder that if games are postponed or abandoned, please let your appointer know so that the correct process for re-arranging the game on GMS can be put in place.

Domestic Tournaments in 2026

England Hockey has provided NPUA with a list of tournaments for the second half of the season, including those to be appointed in conjunction with NYUPL. **ACTION: Umpires and US to update availability asap on GMS**

10-12 March - Girls Schools and Boys T1 finals, Lee Valley – Availability needed by Mid Jan

11-12 April - 16/18 Champs and Supra League, Nottingham – Availability needed by Mid Feb



23-24 Apr - Open Boys Schools Championships, Lee Valley – Availability needed End Feb

2-3 May - EH Finals – (Not on GMS yet - subject to Prem phase II & III dates)

2-4 May - Adult & Masters Finals, Lee Valley – Availability needed Mid March

4 May - O35-65 Plate / Shield, venue TBC – Availability needed Mid March (venue tbc, likely with EH League finals)

6 June - Mixed Finals, Old Loughtonians HC (3 games) – Availability needed Mid March

5. Umpire Support (JH, MH)

Request to update reports on GMS for new panels is still with EH/GMS **ACTION: MH to follow-up** assessor, 89 coach, and 12 coach candidate appointments had been made up to 30 November.

Congratulations to Anddy Higgins and Rob Brownbridge who successfully completed their L3 coach award

Dawn Henning-Reeman completed her umpire assessor refresher and is added back to the panel

Umpire Support milestones: Margaret Hunnaball (100 matches) and Jackie Gibbs (300 matches)

Strong availability from the umpire support team has ensured that most umpires have been watched at least once. Any umpires that haven't been coached or assessed will be seen early in the second half of the season.

Some US haven't had as many matches as they'd like but approx. 75% of matches are on a Saturday so for those only available on Sundays, it makes things difficult to find games for everyone.

Umpires are reminded to add umpire support feedback for their coach or assessor into GMS. The feedback rate is low and this reduces our ability to track the performance of our umpire support team. **ACTION: panel leads/mentors to remind umpires and LP to send the 'how-to-complete' crib sheet**

6. Panel updates:

The NPUA panels have been designed to make movement within panels more fluid and based on current 'form'. This includes moving umpires to NPUA reserve panels who do not complete the fitness test by the summer deadline, with return to panel following completion and / or assessment, and those on N1,N2 and HPP who do not complete the second test by 18th January deadline. OPC will continue to monitor form, including availability, in making panel movement decisions.

Reports from Panel leads/mentors:

Panel leads / mentors provided a full update of their panels.

Hamish Jamson (M N1)

Clubs have appreciated the volume of US attending games (thanks to JS for supporting) which has added to positive discussions and reaching consensus.

Panel Updates:

Dan Reid is moved to M N2

Louise Knipe (W N1)

Andy Poulain has retired from umpiring and is thanked for his long service to NPUA – 246 Outdoor games and 93 Indoors. A players' umpire, Andy will be sorely missed on the circuit. Andy remains a member of NPUA and will undertake his L3 coach award.



Gary Stent (M N2)

Panel Updates:

Jaime Cox, Jonny Downer and Kevin Roberts moved to M N1 and achieve their National Badge

As per W N1, noted that Andy Poulain has retired from umpiring.

Ann Hopkins (W N2)

Welcome to new members Alex Miles and Liam Sutton following successful transfer assessments.

David Monger (HPP)

A highly successful Development Weekend was held on 22–23 November in Birmingham, with 19 of the 22 HPP members in attendance, supported by six US members alongside HH and DM.

The panel continues to demonstrate strong engagement through:

- Weekly “Decision Time” discussions via the WhatsApp group
- Monthly online meetings focused on key topics such as *Communication*, *Resilience*, and others
- Welcome to new HPP Member, Charlie Cooper

Overall, the panel is actively embracing the development ethos and showing commitment to continuous improvement.

Graduations from HPP

Sam Church moved to M N1 and achieves his men’s National Badge

Tanya Sargeant achieves women’s National Badge and will remain on HPP until the end of season 25/26 when she will be transferred to W N1.

Max Davidson achieves Women’s National Badge but remains on HPP for Men’s pathway development

Other HPP updates

Will Holmes is moved to M N3

Matt Smith is moved to reserve

Dawn Bonner (M N3)

The Panel engaged actively in the weekly decision time throughout the season & a half season catch up is planned for 15th December.

Panel Updates:

David Halkyard moved to HPP

Matthew Pilgrim moved to M N2

Welcome to Gregor Hofstede on his return to NPUA.

Debbie Garner (W N3)

Panel Updates:

Dan Carter is moved to W N2



Charles Hallows (M N4)

Welcome to new members Paul Sexby following his successful transfer assessment, and Geoff Riley on his return to NPUA. Decision Time well received and useful discussions in the Panel group

Panel Updates:

Stephen Limbert Mason is moved to N3

Ben Nicholls is moved to reserve

Mark Everard (W N4)

The panel continues to grow with the addition of 10 successful candidates since the start of the season: Harriett Burdett, James Cowden, Millie Ely, Polly Roberts, Gary Joy, Cameron Stokell, Daniel Thompson, Maria Bello, Gihan Thabrew, Helen Prinsloo. Weekly interaction on 'Decision time' is growing

Panel Updates:

Polly Roberts moved to HPP

Helen Prinsloo is moved to W N3

Simon Gillett (Candidates)

Since the last meeting, following assessments we have 7 new L3s:

Harriett Burdett, James Cowden, Millie Ely, Polly Roberts, Gary Joy, Cameron Stokell, Daniel Thompson passed their L3 assessments and were moved to W N4

Following assessments:

Alex Miles and Liam Sutton have been transferred to W N2 panel and Paul Sexby to the M N4 panel

Gregor Hofstede returned to NPUA and was moved to the M N3 panel

Geoff Riley returned to NPUA and was moved to the M N4 panel

Paul Sexby has been transferred to the M N4 panel

Areas should submit any new candidate nominations to SG as soon as possible and no later than 1st March, noting that appointing by NPUA is done weekly in the last few weeks of the season and appointing candidates becomes less likely in that period. **ACTION: SG to send reminder to Areas.**

Retirements from NPUA reserve panel: Katherine Abbie (W) and Ben Peters (M)

Milestones

Congratulations to the following members on achieving Milestones **since the last meeting** in EHL and Umpire Support:

Stephen Rice – 400

Jackie Gibbs – 300 US

Nick Padget – 300

Clare White – 200

Campbell Reeman – 200

Margaret Hunnaball – 100 US

Dan Stewart – 100

Mark Oldfield – 100

Stuart Fenton – 100

James Barnes – 100



Jaime Cox – 100

NYUPL

A formal young umpire panel within NPUA has been established with the help of EHO (Will Davey as lead) and a final plan is being developed.

International Updates

Congratulations to Dawn Bonner on her FIH upgrade to Centre Panel Umpires' Manager

7. AOB

None

8. Date of next meeting:

May tbc **ACTION: LP to propose dates**

The meeting Closed at 21.42 pm with thanks to attendees for their hard work on behalf of NPUA

